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SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR YOUNG ADULTS' EMPLOYABILITY: A CROSS-BORDER COMPARATIVE STUDY
(VANNA BOFFO, AZEEZ BABATUNDE ADEBAKIN, CARLO TERZAROLI)

This paper presents a comparative analysis of theoretical aspects and policy statements concerning entrepreneurship in Italian and Nigerian higher education. It analyses the development of entrepreneurial education and concludes that both countries share common values. It therefore recommends integrating entrepreneurship as one pillar of future universities.

Introduction

The issue we discuss in this paper concerns an unaddressed aspect of adult education courses at the higher education level. It is traditionally closely related to economics and generally not so popular. Entrepreneurship represents a relevant aspect of young adults' educational process. The patchiness depends on the specific context in which the country is situated: we are fully aware, for example, that Italy doesn't have a culture of entrepreneurship at the higher education level, and that such a culture is still very young in Nigeria.

The policy statements of the European Commission nevertheless clearly say:

To bring Europe back to growth and create new jobs, we need more entrepreneurs. The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan is the Commission's answer to challenges brought by the gravest economic crisis in the last 50 years. It is a blueprint for action to unleash Europe's entrepreneurial potential, remove existing obstacles and revolutionise the culture of entrepreneurship in the EU. It aims to ease the creation of new businesses and to create a much more supportive environment for existing entrepreneurs to thrive and grow. (European Commission, 2017, p. 3)

Following the analysis that focuses on the best higher education models for the development of global citizens, we should take into account the strategic challenge of work. We should not be simply interested in the issue of educational offerings. In fact, we know that higher education is everywhere involved in an improvement process to foster graduation rates; at the same time, we also recognise that employability is increasingly becoming a key issue for the reflection on university courses, especially in countries with high youth unemployment rates. As a matter of fact, both problems generate issues of social exclusion that impact on society and on young people's transition to adulthood as well.

Discussing social inclusion and citizenship for the quality of our future societies, demands that these categories be translated into human actions (Arendt, 1958) that identify the sense of being part of the same world. Adult education directly relates to human formation and, in this sense, entrepreneurship could represent one of its specific features, because it is an issue of education and its most effective application is at the higher education level. Even before discussing business, we should focus on entrepreneurship as a personal capability, as a skill (or soft skill) to be acquired to increase the quality of individual and social human life.

The Ancient Greeks already suggested the importance of self-formation. We could be able to understand self-formation changes, transformation, and evolutions in past centuries (Hadot,

2002). Nowadays, it is possible to talk about self-entrepreneurship as one aspect of being capable of self-formation in the same way that philosophy has provided self-wisdom ‘guidelines’. What does self-formation mean? It denotes the ability to self-orient and self-guide, to identify goals; it means to be flexible and able to understand others; it means the sense of time and place in which you operate; it means to be capable to mentalise and anticipate context and institutional needs and the needs of people involved in them (Boffo, Del Gobbo, Gioli, & Torlone, 2017). These elements represent the soft skills that employers seek during job interviews and the same life skills identified in many adult education studies (Epale, 2017). Soft skills can be learned, and they can be taught. However, university courses still don’t know how to effectively teach the ‘rare bird’ of transdisciplinary skills.

Entrepreneurship is one key element of self-formation. We could consider it an element of higher education but also the final outcome of education itself. Anyhow, the close connection between disciplines, entrepreneurship, and education could be considered the first axis for the comparative study we elaborate in this paper. The second axis is represented by the conviction of the strong link between entrepreneurship and learning. You learn to become an entrepreneur, to understand the importance of undertaking work and doing so during your whole life (Federighi, 2013). Perhaps the university has lost sight of this last aspect. Who can become this driving force today? It is a crucial topic, especially in this age of uncertainty and liquidity, where barriers and new walls are erected to separate us from our neighbours, from migrants and, in general, from ourselves, too. These two axes guide the research on a marginalised category, which has been traditionally conceived as belonging only to the market field but is, conversely, directly related to the self, life, and work dimensions. That’s why it is a key topic: because it concerns our students’ and graduates’ future lives. If we want to create an appropriate educational offer at the higher education level, we should be able to know also about entrepreneurship and its multifaceted variants, starting with self-entrepreneurship.

A glance at the European Commission’s definition could provide a clear outline of this perspective: ‘Entrepreneurship is an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation, risk taking, ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives.’ (European Commission, 2006, p. 8).

The definition is a standpoint for higher education that considers employability part of the curriculum. In fact, universities are increasingly asked to support the development of those skills to bolster students’ capability of navigating multidimensional working pathways with a renewed sense of entrepreneurship.

Employability and entrepreneurship: Concepts and clarifications

There are two basic approaches currently being adopted in the research on employability. One is the employment-centred approach, the other is the competence-centred approach (European Commission, EACEA, & Eurydice, 2014). The employment-centred approach can broadly be defined as focused on the ability to gain employment and to maintain it. This definition only considers the outcome of getting a job, with no attention to the personal and professional development of the individual. On the other side, the competence-centred approach focuses on the skills and competence that students could develop during their higher education studies.

Clearly, employability implies something about the capacity of the graduate to be functional and productive in a job and is not to be confused with the acquisition of a job (Yorke, 2006).

This standpoint is derived from the scientific work of Lee Harvey¹, Mantz Yorke², and the Higher Education Academy³. They propose two interesting understandings of the concept, based on the importance of the university in the development of students' employability.

The definition by Harvey (2001) emphasises both individual and institutional roles in employability. On the individual side, employability could relate to 'the propensity of students to obtain a job' (Harvey, 2001, p. 98). On the institutional side, employability is a responsibility of higher education itself (Harvey & Knight, 1996). Harvey clearly underlines that

in some institutions or parts of institutions, this employability-development is explicit and integral to the education provided and in others it is not. Medicine, nursing, social work and initial teacher training have programmes of study closely linked to learning in practice settings that are directly related to future employment. (Harvey, 2001, p. 99)

From this perspective, employability is a matter of learning (Taatala, 2010) and not just a simple indicator of employment.

In the same perspective, Yorke (2006) illustrates this point clearly. He defines employability as 'a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy' (Yorke, 2006, p. 8). Overall, Yorke suggests focusing not only on the gain of employment but on a broader perspective that considers the successful contribution to the labour market, the economy, and the community. Hence, from a pedagogical perspective, it opens new pathways (such as the design of innovative university curricula and new specific educational programmes with the study courses) for the research on employability linked to the formative process of the subject.

It is necessary to clarify exactly what is commonly meant by entrepreneurship. In this sense, entrepreneurship is a matter of employability since it occurs in any worker, regardless of sector and specific content. In detail, it describes the ability of finding opportunities to create value through innovation (Moreland, 2006). That is why entrepreneurship could be understood as a key competence for students' employability, enabling them to act effectively in different contexts and to manage personal and professional challenges. In this sense, it is directly linked to specific skills (Kucel, Róbert, Buil, & Masferrer, 2016) that could be bolstered at the higher education level.

¹ Lee Harvey is a former director of the Centre for Research and Evaluation at Sheffield Hallam University. He is currently a visiting professor at Copenhagen Business School. He cooperated with the UK's Higher Education Academy in many research programmes.

² Mantz Yorke is Honorary Visiting Professor at Lancaster University. His research interests are predominantly connected to students' experiences of higher education, covering areas such as student success, employability, assessment, and retention. He worked at the UK's Higher Education Academy for many years.

³ The Higher Education Academy started working on employability in 2006 with a paper series. The works comprised Professor Peter Knight (Open University), Professor Lee Harvey (Sheffield Hallam University), Professor Stephen McNair (Surrey University), Dr Brenda Little (CHERI), Professor Kate Purcell (University of the West of England), Mike Hill (Graduate Prospects), and Val Butcher from the Higher Education Academy.

Moreover, entrepreneurship continues to attract interest from both academics and policy makers, so much so that many universities now include entrepreneurship studies as part of their curricula. Similarly, empirical studies exploring the extent to which entrepreneurial education influences the decision to become an entrepreneur are steadily increasing (Peterman & Kennedy, 2003).

Entrepreneurship is the act of risk-taking in the production of goods and services for profit maximisation. This process goes beyond ideation but also conceptualisation, enterprise creation, commercialisation, and business growth (Dionco-Adetayo, 2014). In Osemeke (2012), entrepreneurship refers to the process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structured training and institution-building programmes. Maigida, Saba, and Namkere (2013) describe entrepreneurship as an ability to think creatively and become an effective problem solver. They believe that entrepreneurship is the practice of consistently converting goods and ideas into productive and profitable commercial ventures. According to Klaipeda Business School (2009), entrepreneurship is defined as the main skill necessary to conform to the conditions of the ever-changing knowledge and information society. This means that entrepreneurship is about the acquisition of skills relevant to the contemporary needs of the dynamic society.

Table 1: Perspectives of the Nature of Entrepreneurship

Creation of Wealth	Entrepreneurship involves assuming the risks associated with the facilitation of production in exchange for profit.
Creation of Enterprise	Entrepreneurship entails the founding of a new business venture where none existed before.
Creation of Innovation	Entrepreneurship is concerned with unique combinations of resources that make existing methods or products obsolete.
Creation of Change	Entrepreneurship involves creating change by adjusting, adapting, and modifying one's personal repertoire, approaches, and skills to meet different situations and demands.
Creation of Jobs	Entrepreneurship is concerned with employing, managing and developing the factors of production, including the labour force.
Creation of Value	Entrepreneurship is a process of creating value for customers by exploiting untapped opportunities.
Creation of Growth	Entrepreneurship is defined as a strong and positive orientation towards growth in sales, income, assets, and employment

Source: Onwuka, Ugwu, & Kalu (2014, p. 274)

Bassey and Archibong (2005) state that the goal of entrepreneurship education is to empower graduates (irrespective of their areas of specialisation) with skills that will enable them to engage in income-yielding ventures if they are unable to secure formal jobs. This is a reorientation from job seeking to job creation. Likewise, Cheng and Chan (2009) point out that entrepreneurship training increases entrepreneurial self-efficacy, self-employment, and a risk-taking attitude in the entrepreneur. It also creates enormous business opportunities and trains people with innovative enterprise skills to grasp the opportunities for starting new entrepreneurial activities (Cheng & Chan, 2009).

The role of higher education institutions (HEIs) in solving problems of development through the production of skilled labour has received serious contributions in recent time across the world. HEIs are expected to become responsive to the demands of the labour market, in the context of an increasingly competitive, complex, and globalised knowledge economy. Postigo, Lacobucci, and Tamborini (2006) acknowledge the significance of higher education and the role it plays in entrepreneurial activity, stating that it is critical to attract young adults to entrepreneurship, especially as current industrial trends are towards a knowledge-based environment. However, since many of the factors that could unlock the employment potential of young adults are also on the demand side of the labour market, private sector development, including entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activities, can be part of the solution (Brixiova & Kangoye, 2014). This may, however, be achievable through vigorous entrepreneurial skills development and training especially in the context of higher education.

To facilitate an evolving understanding of entrepreneurship, continued research efforts that investigate the skills required by entrepreneurs are essential. This is because skills acquisition involves the development of a new skill, practice the way of doing things usually gained through training or experience. Studies have shown that skill acquisition is the most critical factor in the utilisation of entrepreneurship opportunities for self-employment (Ekpe, Razak, & Mat, 2012). More importantly for economic prosperity in the twenty-first century, in which the entire world has become private sector-driven, possession of entrepreneurial skills is required to function productively.

Cross-border comparison of innovation and entrepreneurial learning

The execution, implementation, and practices of entrepreneurship education are observed to vary across regions and institutions. This paper therefore provides experiences in terms of implementation and practices from European (Italy) and African (Nigeria) perspectives. The choice of these countries was informed by the in-depth knowledge of the education system in the two countries, where the authors practise as researchers and teachers and engage in community services. Indeed, the authors shared their perspectives during the International Winter School that took place in Würzburg in February 2017. In this sense, the comparison is the joint effort to analyse and compare theoretical aspects and policy actions in both countries.

The implementation of a national strategy for entrepreneurship in Italy is strongly supported by the European Commission. The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, published in 2013, stresses the challenge of new and innovative entrepreneurs for Europe (European Commission, 2013) in the context of an economic downturn, started in 2008, which severely affected the global and continental economy. In this direction, the European Union tried to face these structural changes through incentives for competitiveness and growth (European Commission, 2013). Entrepreneurship represents one of the pillars of the Europe 2020 Strategy. As a matter of fact,

an effective strategy for entrepreneurship ‘creates new companies and jobs, opens up new markets, and nurtures new skills and capabilities’ (European Commission, 2013, p. 3). The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan identifies three areas for intervention:

1. Entrepreneurial education and training to support growth and business creation;
2. Strengthening framework conditions for entrepreneurs by removing existing structural barriers and supporting them in crucial phases of the business lifecycle; and
3. Dynamising the culture of entrepreneurship in Europe: nurturing the new generation of entrepreneurs (European Commission, 2013, p. 5).

In detail, the plan intends to: ‘unleash Europe's entrepreneurial potential; remove existing obstacles and to revolutionise the culture of entrepreneurship in Europe; ease the creation of new businesses; and create a much more supportive environment for existing entrepreneurs to thrive and grow’ (European Commission, 2013, p. 5). Unfortunately, Italy has not completely adopted the Action Plan yet. Starting from school education, which provides the medium-term perspective on which entrepreneurship is rooted, there is still no national strategy for the development of an entrepreneurial mind-set in primary and secondary school (European Commission, EACEA, & Eurydice, 2016). This is particularly important for creating a stimulating entrepreneurial environment, because

whether or not they go on to found businesses or social enterprises, young people who benefit from entrepreneurial learning, develop business knowledge and essential skills and attitudes including creativity, initiative, tenacity, teamwork, understanding of risk and a sense of responsibility’ (European Commission, 2013, p. 6).

In this sense, entrepreneurship is not just ‘being an entrepreneur’, but developing the capability to transform ideas into actions that increase employability, too (Komarkova, Gagliardi, Conrads, & Collado, 2015).

The Italian government just adopted, at the national level, the definition of the entrepreneurship competence defined in the European Reference Framework for Key Competences in Lifelong Learning. The key competence is described as follows:

[A] sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects to achieve objectives. This supports individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities, and is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance. (European Communities, 2007, p. 11)

At the higher education level, the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) and the Ministry of Economic Development (MISE) developed in 2012 a joint policy report called *Restart, Italia!* aimed at creating a stimulating learning environment for university students and bolstering the entrepreneurial and innovation culture. Among the policy proposals, the report suggests intervening on students’ awareness about future trends and opportunities. The statement is based on the importance of interdisciplinarity (Morin, 2015) in the world of work. Thus, the report proposes two actions:

- the realisation of activities, programmes, and initiatives aimed at promoting and spreading the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in schools⁴ and universities;
- the creation of Contamination Labs (C-Lab), as special learning environments for students, researchers, and young professionals from different study fields who desire to improve their own entrepreneurial ideas (Fusacchia et al., 2012).

Indeed, unlike the traditional incubators and accelerators, the C-Lab intends to create a space for creative thinking and innovative project design. The report also stated that ‘the initiative could be regarded as a “step back”, since it aims primarily to build a network that allows to gather the human capital needed for highly innovative projects’ (Fusacchia et al., 2012, p. 107). From this perspective, the C-Lab is an experimental didactical project for higher education institutions.

The implementation of Contamination Labs at Italian universities was supported by a public announcement of the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) allocating one million euros for the realisation of such labs at universities situated in poorly developed regions. Four C-Labs were established in 2014 (Mediterranean University in Reggio Calabria, Calabria University in Cosenza, University of Catania, and University of Naples ‘Federico II’). In addition to these subsidised initiatives, four more C-Labs started at the University of Cagliari, University of Trento, Catholic University of Milan ‘Sacro Cuore’, and Polytechnic University of Marche Region in Ancona. The first cycle of the project (2015/2016) saw great success, with 635 participants and more than 1,000 candidates (Calenda, 2016)⁵. These students generated 17 projects that could be further developed. In 2016, the National Research Programme 2015-2020, published by MIUR, provided more funds for new C-Labs and a new public announcement that opened in December 2016 for implementation during the current year.

In Nigeria, the gloomy unemployment rate has brought about the introduction of entrepreneurship education at universities; a course meant to encourage undergraduates to try self-employment, self-reliance, and self-sustenance through enterprise skills. This is currently high on the country’s national agenda, with the hope that it will provide alternative channels of employment for young adults. Entrepreneurship education at universities is a way of alleviating the challenges of unemployment. It is one of the most important drivers of job creation and economic growth. It is crucial for the development of vibrant small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and an informal business sector with multiplying effects on the national economy.

The introduction of entrepreneurship training in higher education is a purposeful intervention by an educator in the life of the learner to impart entrepreneurial qualities and skills to enable the learner to survive in the world of business. Entrepreneurship training could be the most effective method to facilitate labour market placement for the graduate population. Studies in this area have indicated that such training could identify responsible individuals and transform them into job creators, or confront risky individuals and create work challenges for them

⁴ As stated above, the strategy in school education has not been implemented yet.

⁵ The data refers only to C-Labs financed by the Italian Ministry of Education and Research. There is no data available for the other projects.

(Urbano, Aponte, & Toledano, 2008; Dionco-Adetayo, 2014; Akintola, 2014). Through such strategies, the unemployment rate and the rate of job placement failures could be reduced. Entrepreneurship training basically includes the philosophy of self-reliance through structured and formal conveyance of entrepreneurial competencies, concepts, skills, and mental awareness, such as creating a new productive environment and promoting new sets of attitudes that are central to developing entrepreneurial culture (Alberti, Sciscia, & Poli, 2004; Arogundade, 2011). The skills and competencies acquired in the process of this training should be for developing individuals' growth-oriented ventures. This is a reorientation from job-seeking to job creation.

However, the observed underlying problem in Nigeria is the fact that the training that young adults receive has not been fully successful in equipping them with desirable skills and competencies required for job creation, self-employment, and self-reliance, as evident in the high rate of unemployment in the country. The Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) in *National Policy on Education*, section 8, sub-section 59(d), emphasises the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills to prepare prospective graduates to be self-reliant and useful members of the society. The actualisation of this goal, as reported by Owusu-Ansah and Poku (2012), has been largely determined by theoretical knowledge acquisition without functional skills. This implies that the structure and content of formal education in most developing economies, including Nigeria, is designed to prepare young adults for corporate jobs without emphasising creativity and entrepreneurialism (Ikpesu, 2014). Meanwhile, this negates the drive for economic development in a nation such as Nigeria.

To make up for the inadequacies of addressing the unemployment problem, various governmental and non-governmental organisations have initiated policy programmes through support agencies such as the National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP)-1979, National Directorate for Employment (NDE)-1987, Raw Materials & Development Council (RMDC)-1987, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)-2001, and Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN)-2003. More recently, the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWIN)-2011, the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P)-2012 and the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS) programmes were introduced to promote entrepreneurship skills and address the challenges of unemployment among Nigerian young adults.

However, Ebiringa (2012) argues that many of these policy interventions aimed at stimulating entrepreneurship development via small and medium-scale enterprises in Nigeria have always failed and calls for a more inclusive approach. To this end, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in 2004 organised a workshop on 'Entrepreneurship for Nigerian Universities' for all federal universities in the country with the aim of inculcating an entrepreneurial spirit and mind-set in undergraduate students, improving the capacity of youths, developing positive independent and innovative thought, and stimulating future graduates towards venture and wealth creation.

The NUC workshop produced a draft curriculum on entrepreneurial studies for Nigerian universities. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), through the Ministry of Education (MoE) in conjunction with NUC, consequently approved the establishment of Entrepreneurship Study Centres (ESCs) at all federally owned universities across the country, to be funded by the Education Trust Fund (ETF). The ministry also approved the establishment of a project implementation committee to fast-track the institutionalisation of entrepreneurship education at

the nation's universities (Pulka, Rikwentishe, & Ibrahim 2014). The primary role of the ESCs is to stimulate entrepreneurial competencies among students, staff, and the community.

Based on the established structures, many universities have initiated entrepreneurship education programmes to reverse the graduate unemployment trend by giving students the needed training in entrepreneurial skills, enabling them to set up businesses and to consider self-employment as a viable career option.

The policy projection for the first four years (2006-2010) of establishing entrepreneurship programmes at Nigerian universities was that at least 50,000 graduates would complete entrepreneurship training with sufficient entrepreneurial skills. Out of the projected 50,000 trainees, it was equally presumed that at least 10,000 graduates would be self-employed and possibly provide employment opportunities (Akintola, 2014). But today, there is no substantial data to reflect the exact number of students who were either self-employed or created jobs as employment opportunities for others. In no small measure, this leaves much to be desired about the efficacy of the programme at Nigerian universities.

Table 2: Comparison between entrepreneurship education in Italy and Nigeria

Category	Italy	Nigeria
Labour Market/Employment rate	High level of Youth Unemployment Rate	High level of Youth Unemployment Rate
Aims	Self-Employment and Job Placement	Self-Employment and Job Placement
Name of Entrepreneurial Programme	Contamination Lab (C-Lab)	Entrepreneurship Study Centres (ESC)
Year of implementation	2012	2006
Institutional Promoters	Ministry of Economic Development and Ministry of Education, University and Research	Ministry of Education
N° Participants	635 students/graduates in 2015/2016 ¹	50,000 graduates (2006-2010)
Assessment of Results	The Ministry of Economic development registered 17 projects developed by C-Labs in 2015/2016 ²	No substantial data available
Approach	Learning-oriented and Project-oriented	Learning-oriented

Source: Authors' own

Analysis of differences and similarities

In presenting the juxtaposition of situations in the two countries, some differences and similarities concerning the development of entrepreneurial education in Italy and Nigeria emerge. The unemployment rates of young adults in both labour markets represent the first

common point. As a matter of fact, both countries started implementing an entrepreneurship strategy as an action for raising job opportunities. In this sense, the awareness about young adults' issues facing the transition from university to work is the basis for the design of specific measures in that field.

Equally, the aims of Italian and Nigerian strategies rely on the expected outcomes of fostering students' and graduates' employability. What both governments want to disseminate is a broad conception of entrepreneurship, directly linked to employability. Moreover, both C-Lab (Italy) and ESCs (Nigeria) are ambitious learning programmes aimed at spreading the culture of innovation, the development of entrepreneurial competencies, the capability to identify opportunities in different contexts, and the ability to elaborate new ideas for new start-ups and complex organisations.

These experiences present a different approach concerning the design and the structure of the institutional framework. On the one hand, the Italian C-Lab was a young project, created only in 2012 and offering at this point only two announcements for its implementation at universities. On the other hand, Nigerian ESCs started in 2006 and have already reached a well-established level of efficacy and dissemination. Indeed, the institutional promoters revealed some differences between the two strategies. In the Italian experience, the cooperation between the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Education, University and Research is a sign of new and innovative cooperation between the economic and educational approaches at the higher education level. This aspect could be underlined also in terms of participants and results.

Despite the dissimilar starting point of the two strategies, differences could be detected concerning the participation of students, revealing very divergent levels of dissemination at universities (50,000 former participants in five years of the Nigerian strategies against only 635 in the first Italian cycle). Moreover, the technical report elaborated by the Italian Ministry of Economic Development (Calenda, 2016), which gives strong attention to impact and results as opposed to the lack of substantial data in Nigeria, could illustrate the presence of two different standpoints. In fact, we hypothesise that these final elements symbolise two different approaches. The Italian approach is oriented towards both innovative learning pathways and project outcomes, whereas the Nigerian one is directly focused on learning and competencies, without specific measurement (Akintola, 2014) of the efficacy of the project, as measured by the creation of new companies, for example.

Conclusions and implications for research, policy and practice

At the end of this reflective and comparative activity, we reached a clear touch point. The relationship between the need to foster entrepreneurship learning pathways at the higher education level and the need to combine them with goals is directly linked to the world of work.

It seemed really interesting to identify synergies between adult education, employability, and entrepreneurship. As stated above, this relationship is not commonly analysed in scientific research and, moreover, educational policies and strategies do give it the emphasis it deserves. Even today, discussions about business inevitably call into question the pursuit of profit. It is a deeply rooted way of thinking that has characterised the Western world for most decades of the twentieth century. The current debate on enterprise, by contrast, suggests that we are going

beyond the ideological barriers that triggered wars, divisions, barriers, mourning, and pain.

Entrepreneurship should be linked to the concepts of democracy and responsibility (Jonas, 1984); it cannot operate without the ethical principles that will allow us to look at the future, in Europe and in Africa as well. From the research point of view, therefore, the ethical imperative of the principle of responsibility is the main standpoint from which to explore the world, starting from civil and social conditions. The imperative of responsibility, as formulated by Jonas in the late 1970s, inspires the presence of entrepreneurship in Higher education. In fact, values share the comparative pathways more than the specific contents of learning.

Research can therefore be oriented towards: (1) the creation of alternative didactics capable of (2) generating ideas and (3) supporting the creativity of each student. Moreover, research should be capable of (4) identifying the perspectives of the educational programme by monitoring and evaluating graduates' careers, and of (5) providing solutions in line with local, national, and international needs. With regard to the relevance of entrepreneurship as a crosscutting and inter-disciplinary idea, a glance at the university of the future could summarise these points.

Practical activities have already been pointed out:

1. the creation of shared co-working spaces;
2. the presence of idea-generation laboratories;
3. the implementation of mentorship activities for single students or groups wishing to advance their business ideas;
4. the organisation of transversal courses aimed at understanding business models;
5. the statement of work as one of the pillar of university missions;
6. the valorisation of work as the result of study and research.

This second part should identify the idea that work is the driving force of higher education. If the university of the twentieth century became a mass university, and also a social elevator and a place of cultural growth, the university of the twenty-first century must be developed as the space for future ideas. It must become the centre for elaborating human values and ideals that focus on shared work, but also on decent work for all people.

In conclusion, we focus on educational policy guidelines. Mainly in Europe, too little thinking is devoted to innovation, work generation, and job diversification. Looking at the economic downturn that involved the whole world, we notice that most countries have no effective solutions for youth unemployment, particularly in Southern Europe. In this sense, higher education has to do more and better to provide young adults with useful and applicable skills, to make life-planning a central aspect of each student's experience in our courses. Moreover, we must educate men and women able to engage in dialogue in a new world: As Edgar Morin has said, a new education is still possible (Morin, 2015). Since the university is a place of learning, the revolution of 'learning entrepreneurship' is a new target to be reached and improved as a goal for the future.

Each teacher, as an actor of this new storytelling in the universities, should reinforce his/her disciplinary methods and contents to strengthen the transformation that is naturally inscribed in every educational process.

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